

over the question whether the children of dual nationality should be given Chinese or Siamese education.

Next we come to the problem of investment by the Chinese in Siam. Because of the contributions our compatriots have made to Siam in the past and because of the peculiar position they hold in Siam's economic structure at present, the economic prosperity of the Chinese augurs well for the welfare of the Siamese nation. As the Siamese government has taken an unfavorable attitude towards the Chinese, it has become imperative for the Chinese government to reach with the Siamese government some sort of guarantee of the economic status of Chinese business men, industrialists and laborers. The labor laws must go. They are unwise, because while the Siamese government cannot enforce them, they do cause no small amount of ill feeling between the two peoples.

One aspect of the economic status of our industrialists in Siam which deserves special attention is the ownership of land. Only one-twentieth of Siam's land is under cultivation. Development on a big scale is out of the question, because she has no money and experts to put the scheme to work. For development on a small scale she needs the industrious Chinese. For this service as well as for their services in the past it seems only right that the Chinese be given the special privilege of owning the land, as they have hitherto been enjoying to the great benefit of both the Chinese and the Siamese.

Finally there is the problem of immigration and domicile. The landing tax, the process fee, the tax for the right of domicile have for their objectives not only to bar Chinese laborers and women from entry into Siam, but also to increase government revenue. In the first objective they have succeeded only too well, but in the second they have failed miserably. As pointed out in one of the preceding articles, before the enforcement of the 1933 immigration law each steamer from Swatow brought several hundred or even over 1,000 passengers, but after its enforcement each steamer brings only a score or so each trip and many of them cannot land! This means that formerly when one steamer docked at Bangkok the immigration office collected some 37,450 *bahts* (taking each steamer as carrying on the average 700 persons each trip and each person who landed must pay 35.50 *bahts* for the landing tax, the process fee and the domicile tax), but now when a steamer docks at Bangkok, the immigration office cannot collect more than 2,470 *bahts* (taking each steamer now as carrying only 20 passengers each trip and each of them has to pay 123.50 *bahts* for the same purposes), which means a loss of 34,980 *bahts*, when one steamer makes one trip from China to Siam. Surely these figures are worth the attention of the Siamese government.

Nevertheless the reduction of the taxes which Chinese immigrants have to pay, or the mere lightening of other restrictions, is not enough to induce the Chinese people to migrate to Siam. She must offer them opportunities as well. And opportunities she has to offer aplenty. The small percentage of her land under cultivation surely shows that there is still room enough for both the Siamese and many more Chinese to live on it comfortably. In answer to the motion of non-confidence in the Siamese

THE LITTLE CRITIC

EDITED BY LIN YUTANG

An Open Reply to Randall Gould

Dear Mr. Gould,

I have read your open letter to me in *The China Critic* with great interest, and am only sorry that I hadn't seen it before it came out, otherwise I would certainly have written a postscript. However, I am making up for it now:

Now, do you call yourself my friend when you suggest that I should write a satiric novel about contemporary China? Of course, you have also kindly mentioned that I should exercise a self-censorship and "catch myself by the neck with both hands and choke myself at times, lest someone else apply a garotte to the job in more conclusive fashion." Very kind of you, Mr. Gould. I love my own skin.

But the trouble is, your suggestion is really so tempting, and I am fearing that the idea will not leave me alone. I want you to know that, even if I never come to write such a book, I heartily approve of your brilliant idea. Or perhaps shall I suggest this idea to some good Chinese writers and let them do the job? I am merely throwing out a few hints to support your statement that there is no lack of material in contemporary China for such a picaresque novel. As I have already indicated in my book, there are plenty of "rogues" to be made heroes in such a satirical novel. In fact, *Lun Yu*, the humorous magazine that I founded and edited, lives and prospers by merely scanning the most innocent surface of the doings of such rogues. All of them love their

parliament, the Minister of Economic Affairs pleaded the failure to carry out many of the government projects on the ground that both money and expert personnel were sorely needed. And yet they are doing everything possible to antagonize the people who control 70 to 80 per cent of their national economy, because of their anti-Chinese sentiments.

This leads to the fundamental issue involved — that of the attitude of the Siamese leaders. Their attitude as revealed above is anything but sane, though there is a cause for it. However, the difference between statesmen and politicians lies just in this: while a statesman is able to rise above his personal feelings, a politician is ever seeking to satisfy his own desires. The situation in Siam demands the cooperation between the two peoples, while the personal feeling of their leaders leads to antagonism. It remains to be seen whether or not the leaders of the Siamese nation are statesmen.

On the other hand, the Chinese people, too, must change their attitude toward the Siamese. They are reaping today what they sowed yesterday, and looking toward tomorrow, it would be well for them to behave wisely now before it is too late.

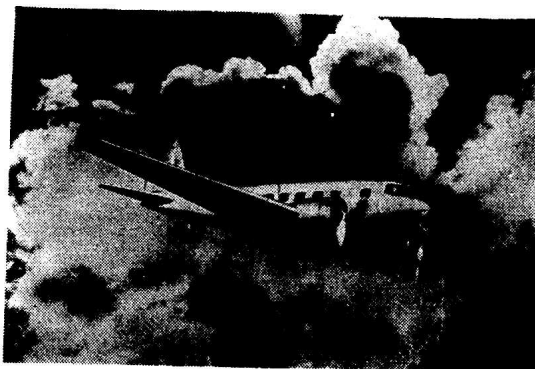
mothers and all of them believe in Confucius. Some of them love young girls, and not a few of them love young boys. But they also love China, and Moral Regeneration and a good bank-book. Nearly all of them believe in fortune-tellers. We have a column there called "Fortnightly News," which instead of reporting on the important current events, is devoted to reporting the curious sayings, statements, pronouncements and actual activities of our weird, mediaeval warlords. This column, somewhat similar to "Americana" of the *American Mercury*, has been acclaimed the most attractive feature of our magazine, because we find therein material which surpasses the imagination of any humorous writer.

You have quoted Iff and Petrov as saying in *New Yorker* that "it is because life is so tragical that we write funny books." Life in China is indeed so tragical that we have to try to be funny, or die of mental asphyxia. Actually I have to thank the present state of things and the rigid censorship for developing my present style, which many call a "satirical" style. I never learnt this style until I came to live in Shanghai in the summer of 1927. I did not write this style while I was in Peking under the Tuan Ch'i-jui or Ts'ao K'un "government," for I had the liberty to say jolly well what I liked in criticism of the government in a Peking Chinese daily right under their nose. This accounts also for the popularity of *Lun Yu* and the success of a new school of humorous writers. Humor is prospering in China for the same reason that it is prospering in Soviet Russia.

I can assure you that some one will write a satirical novel ten or fifteen years from now when the personages and highlights on the present political stage are out of power. For we have in China a tradition for writing satirical fiction, owing to the fact that censorship is nothing new in China, and open criticism was always dangerous. The Chinese nation have been urinating on the bronze statue of the traitor Ts'in Kwei in Hangchow for the last thousand years, and they have also been urinating on all our wicked officials and eunuchs in literature. To come down to recent times, there have been already novels exposing the private lives of Yuan Shih-k'ai's household and other officials of his time. Censorship always gives a certain zest to our tea-house gossip, and it is in our tea-house gossip, from which such authors pick up their material, that the Chinese people have their revenge at their erstwhile oppressors. Two of the best Chinese satiric novels are *Julinwaishih* (儒林外史) and *Laots'an Yuchi* (老殘遊記). A very recent one satirising Chinese official life of twenty or thirty years ago is called *Kuanch'ang Hsienhsing Chi* (官場現形記) or "Present Phenomena of Official Life."

It seems to me that a series of portrait sketches of our weird, romantic, unbelievable warlords in modern China, living and dead, will form a fascinating volume. Imagine a series of sketches of personages like Chang Tsungch'ang, Yen Hsishan, Chang TsoLin, T'ang Yulin, Liu Hsiang, Wang Chanyuan, Han Fuchu, etc. The

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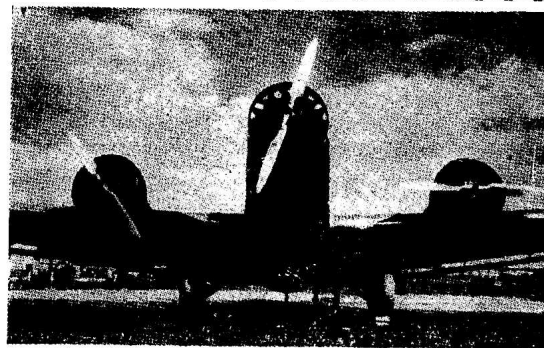
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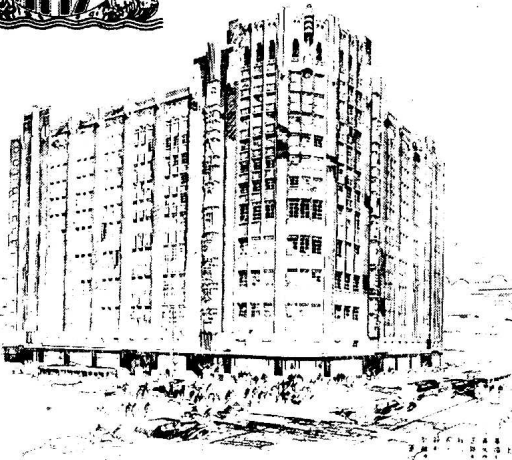
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Dogmeat General will of course top the list. I wrote a very fine obituary notice of this general when he died. I shall be very grateful if you and other writers will supply me with any anecdotes about the lives of these generals. I will give here only three instances to show the kind of immortal humour that is bound to go down through the ages, whether I write it down or not.

One of the above-mentioned generals came to attend the last Kuomintang Congress in Nanking a month ago. On hearing the assassin's shot at the Congress, he fell plump down on the floor and refused to get up and it was with great difficulty that people assisted him to his feet. There are, of course, a lot of humorous episodes connected with the pandemonium after this attempt at assassination, but I will concentrate on this general. He wanted to have his hair-cut in Nanking, but he could not trust himself to a strange barber, and so he demanded that the barber who was going to cut his hair should provide himself with a shop guarantee. In time his secretary succeeded in finding one and the barber came. Four armed guards then stood at four corners of the room surrounding the general, while the barber was doing his work. The barber cut the general's hair in fear and trepidation. The general gave him four dollars, but seeing a curious piece of rubber cloth (usually used for diapers) which the barber used in wrapping up his neck, he was greatly delighted with it and paid him an extra dollar for the diaper. The barber came out and told people that if he had known that he was to cut the general's hair with four armed guards around him, he would not have gone even for ten dollars.

This general was waging a war somewhere in Shan-tung a few years ago and suffered a bad defeat, not through his own fault, but because "God was against him" —there was a big rain. The rain made it impossible for his soldiers to light their opium pipes, which in turn made it impossible for them to gather enough strength for the battle.

Down south the playing of *mahjong* has recently been forbidden in a certain province. One would have suspected that it was connected with the New Life Movement and the Moral Regeneration of the Chinese nation. What actually happened was that the wife of the general in charge of the province was a great *mahjong* player and a bad loser. She had lost, according to report, over a quarter million dollars over the *mahjong* table, for she was a very bad player, although she was so fond of it. One day she had to sustain another big loss and flew into a rage and decided on the spot that *mahjong* was a bad thing. Hence the people of that province to-day must not play *mahjong* because the general's wife lost her temper.

Such are the kind of episodes that have filled Chinese novels in the past and they will surely fill some novels to be written in the future, whether I write them down or not.

LIN YUTANG